# The Top 7 Finger Patterns on Guitar

For a guitarist, there are several skills that make up the foundation of their playing. Along with learning chords, practicing finger picking can add a new dimension to your playing.

There are several common finger picking patterns that are used throughout countless songs. Here is a collection of the top 7 finger picking patterns used.

Before we get into the specifics, here is what everything on the diagrams mean...

- Numbers on TAB Staff: Show what fret you should be pressing down.
- Fretting Hand Fingering Numbers
  - $\circ$  T = Thumb
  - 1 = Index Finger
  - o 2 = Middle Finger
  - 3 = Ring Finger

#### Pattern 1: T-1-2-3

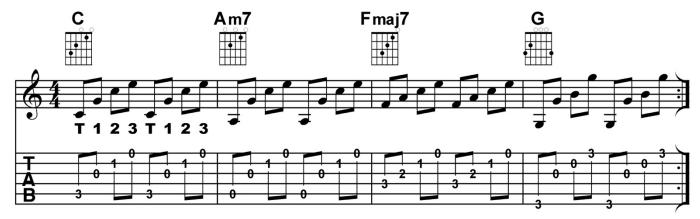
The picking hand thumb (T) is on the 6th, 5th or 4th strings.

The picking hand index (1), middle (2), and ring (3) fingers can be on the...

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd strings (outside strings)
- or on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> strings (inside strings).

Practice with a metronome with a steady rhythm.

This exercise uses the "outside strings". But practice it with the "inside strings" as well. (Notice that the Fmaj7 (measure 3) can only be played with the outside strings.)

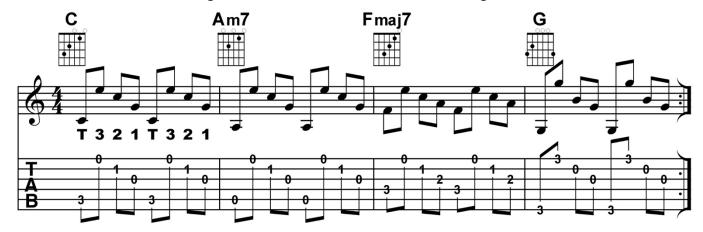


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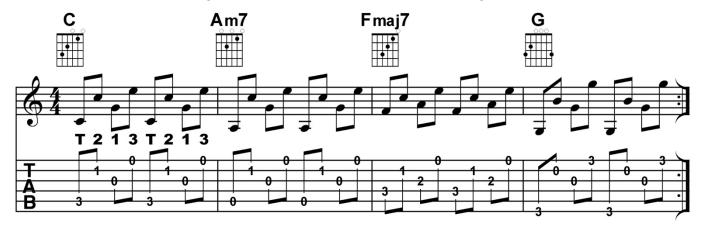
#### Pattern 2: T-3-2-1

Practice with the outside strings as shown, then with the inside strings.



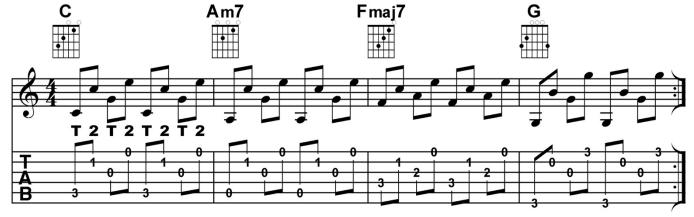
### Pattern 3: T-2-1-3

Practice with the outside strings as shown, then with the inside strings



# Pattern 4: T-2-T-2 (Figure 8)

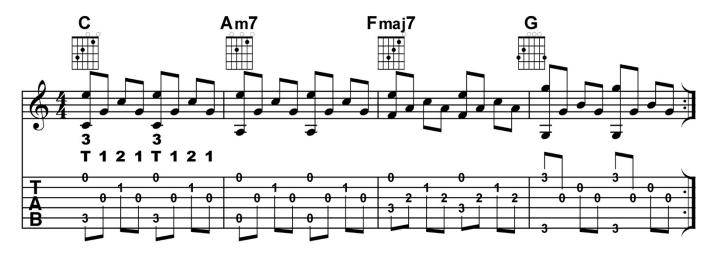
These are the same notes as the previous exercise, but the picking has changed. This pattern uses only the thumb (T) and the middle finger (2). Each finger is covering 2 strings. This pattern creates a rolling "figure 8" motion with the picking hand which can be played quite fast after some practice.





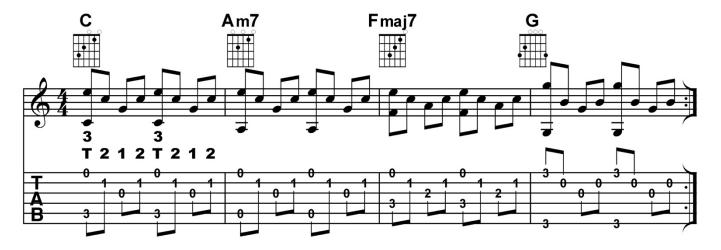
### Pattern 5: T&3-1-2-1

Now, let's add some double notes. Another very useful pattern is to play the lowest and highest strings together, then alternate the inner voices. Practice with the inside and outside voicings.



### Pattern 6: T&3-2-1-2

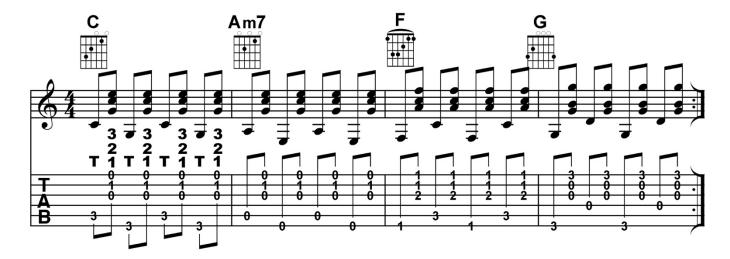
Another variation of the previous pattern is to reverse the alternating notes.



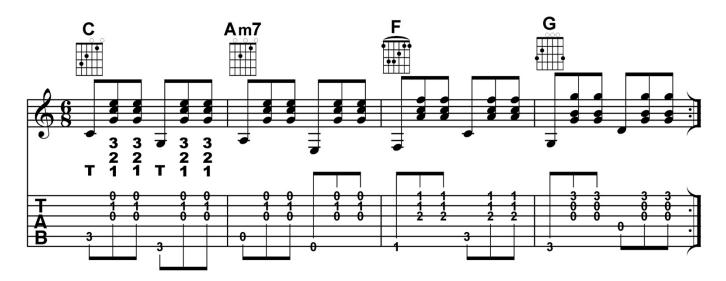


## Pattern 7: T-123 (Alternating Bass)

This Travis Picking pattern alternates the bass note (T) between the root and 5<sup>th</sup> of the chord. Notice how the roots and 5ths switch places when playing through the different chords.



This pattern can also be adjusted to work with measures using 3 beats.



## Closing Thoughts

Playing through each of the patterns by themselves isn't particularly hard. Just practice them slow and carefully making sure that each motion is correct.

Once you can play each pattern smoothly, then apply them to different chord progressions and gradually increase your speed.

Learn all you can! - Steve